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CONWAY MEMORIAL LECTURE

THE LIFE PILGRIMAGE
OF
MONCURE D. CONWAY

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THE LIFE PILGRIMAGE
OF
MONCURE DANIEL CONWAY

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CONWAY MEMORIAL LECTURE

THE LIFE PILGRIMAGE
OF
MONCURE DANIEL CONWAY

DELIVERED AT SOUTH PLACE INSTITUTE ON
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BY
JOHN M. ROBERTSON, M.P.

(Edward Clodd in the Chair)

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CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS

I MUST attribute the honour of occupying this chair to-night to the fact that I was one of the dwindling company of those who had the privilege of Moncure Conway's friendship for many years. He came to London in 1863, but some time passed—I have no record of the date—before I met him. One reason was that in abandoning the current creeds, while adhering to theism, I had, as the old phrase goes, "sat under" Dr. Martineau, and had never attended at South Place. I was in good company; memory recalls that among his constant hearers were Sir Charles and Lady Lyell, Miss Buckley (then acting as Sir Charles's secretary), Dr. Carpenter, and Miss Frances Power Cobbe. But the atmosphere around, and to some extent within, the

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Churches was evolutionary, and therefore revolutionary. *Essays and Reviews* appeared in 1860; Colenso on the *Pentateuch* in 1862; *Ecce Homo* in 1865; and some of us, no longer at ease in Zion, began to find what truth lay in the epigram that "Unitarianism was a soft-bed for falling Christians."

We call 1859 *annus mirabilis*, for therein appeared Darwin's *Origin of Species* and Kirchhoff and Bunsen's *Spectrum Analysis*. We may bracket with it 1863 as the year when Huxley published his *Lectures on Man's Place in Nature*. *Mutatis mutandis*, there may be said of Darwin and himself what was said of Erasmus and Luther: one laid the egg, the other hatched it. For, pushing the theory of natural selection to its logical conclusion, Huxley brought home the fact that, if the processes of evolution operate anywhere, they operate everywhere, and therefore must be extended to man psychically as well as physically. The evidence in proof of this fell into line with that adduced by Kirchhoff and Bunsen in proof of the fundamental identity of chemical composition of the sun

and other members of the sidereal universe. So the birth of the new anthropology followed quickly on that of the new astronomy.

My reference to this group of facts is apposite, because these Memorial Lectures deal with a man who was neither astronomer nor chemist nor biologist, but, in the deepest and fullest sense of a word which, academically, has had a restricted meaning—a humanist. To no one could the familiar sentence from Terence: *Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto*—"I am a man, and nothing human can be indifferent to me"—be more applicable. For it was this extension of the doctrine of evolution to mind, resulting in the foundation of the science of comparative psychology, that had special attraction for Moncure Conway. Religion and ethics are alike man-made products and correlated. Both are involved in the universal, unending life-struggle; the struggle for food and mates. The quest after food as a persistent need intensified the feeling of dependence on unknown and therefore dreaded powers, who helped or hindered the hungry hordes, and

who had to be "squared" in one way or another. Herein were the germs of religion. That quest also determined the relations between the several human groups; it permitted no "eccentrics" in these circles; no self-seekers, each with his own axe to grind. Common needs were the stimuli to common action; the cultivation of what was good, the repression of what was bad, each having in aim the commonweal. Herein were the germs of ethics, which still remain largely in the intertribal stage. From the day when he abandoned theistic beliefs, Moncure Conway made it his life-work to promote the formation of the Ethical Societies whose increase is one of the most encouraging features of our time. But the task which he set himself bristles with difficulties, because even the more intelligent of mankind, dreading what may be the result of abolition of supernatural sanctions, are reluctant to transfer moral codes from these shifting foundations to the social bedrock. In almost the last talk that I had with the late Sir Alfred Lyall on this subject, he said that the puzzle is to find some adequate

authority ; and, the mass of men being what they are, that must be an invisible one. A parallel is supplied in the history of the conflict in the third century between Christianity and Mithraism. It was a toss-up which was to win, and the issue was in favour of Christianity, not because of its superior morality or its creeds and sacraments, as to which the two religions had much in common, but because Mithraism lacked a personality to whom its followers might make appeal, and with whom they might secure direct relations ; might know in Whom they had believed. That dependence on an invisible but spiritually realized Person, be he Jesus or Buddha, will abide until the remote ages when what Seeley called the " Enthusiasm of Humanity " will inspire the actions of men towards their fellows of every clime and colour.

Among the select who, in their teaching and example, give hope that to this goal mankind may attain was the dear friend and counsellor whose life-work is the subject of Mr. Robertson's lecture. He was of the company of pilgrims of whom Bunyan tells

who "were got over the enchanted ground and entering into the country of Beulah whose air was very sweet and pleasant"; in which "country the sun shineth night and day, wherefore this was beyond the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and also out of the reach of Giant Despair; neither could they from this place so much as see Doubting Castle."

THE LIFE PILGRIMAGE
OF
MONCURE DANIEL CONWAY

IN September, 1904, I had the pleasure of going in Dr. Conway's company to the International Freethought Conference at Rome, after spending some days with him at Paris, where he was occupied in reading the proofs of his Autobiography. At Rome, which he knew from several sojourns, he was my cicerone, and he was concerned to have me see, among other things, the museum of St. John Lateran, in which were some objects of special hierological interest to both of us. It was understood that all the museums of Rome were officially made free to delegates of the Conference by the Government; but at that of St. John Lateran, which was under the

control of the church, we reckoned without our host. On presenting ourselves we found the portals closed, and were curtly told through a grating that there would be no admission till the morrow, at a certain hour. On the morrow we punctually presented ourselves again, only to find the same reception. I explained, in my best Italian, that we had been expressly told to come that day, at that hour; only to receive the surly reply that there was no admission. As I slowly turned away the janitor asked, through his grating, "*Siete pellegrini?*"—are you pilgrims? I candidly replied in the negative, knowing that a party of English Catholic pilgrims were then in the city, and inferring that the query had regard to them. Further, I showed our official card, entitling us to enter the museums. The refusal was now final, and fully intelligible. The Church authorities knew of the Free-thought Conference, and were determined to exclude its members from their museums; though, of course, there was nothing to

hinder our entering the churches, the presumably sacred places.

When I told my friend the purport of the closing dialogue he turned on me in mock wrath: "Not pilgrims? Why did you say that? You can speak for yourself; but what have I been but a pilgrim on earth all my life?" Whereupon we cheerfully turned ourselves to the study of the pagan Rome which tacitly reveals to all men all the shrines and all the secrets that the excavator can discover. Coming thither in his old age as a professed Freethinker to be thus rebuffed by the Christian papacy, Conway had for the first time concretely realized how far he had travelled.

His, indeed, had been a far-stretching pilgrimage, a progress so full of intellectual adventure and transforming experience that this lecture can ill suffice to describe and appraise it. Born in 1832, in the State of Virginia, he had passed by many stages from the unquestioning orthodoxy of that day to membership in the International Freethought

Conference at Rome. He came of good old Virginia and Maryland stocks on both sides, generally with Huguenot and Presbyterian, not Cavalier, connections, though the first Virginian Conway was a kinsman of the house of Conway Castle. But though his own parents were strictly orthodox, he could trace among his forbears a notable set of cases of more or less marked bias to Rationalism. I once quoted to him Tennyson's remark that "Every one of us carries in him a whole vanload of ancestors," and he fastened on the phrase with an emphatic assent, which is curiously borne out in his account of the instances in question.

Only when his hair was beginning to turn grey, he tells us, did it occur to him to inquire why he should "carry the names of three large families into association with religious and political heresies unknown to my contemporary Virginians except as distant horrors." But he could then recall how, as a small boy of twelve, he had heard his scholarly grandfather,

John Moncure Conway, Clerk of Stafford County, remark to his brother-in-law: "I cannot believe that the father of mankind would send any human being into this world knowing that he would be damned." The old gentleman attended no church, nor were he and his wife ever confirmed. One Sunday, at midday, when leaving his office, where he generally spent the Sunday morning, this grandfather saw a stranger angrily bundled out of the only inn in the place because he had gone for a morning walk instead of going to church; and this stranger, Bronson Allcott, the friend of Emerson, was by his fellow culprit harboured for several days.

Then there was the grand-uncle, Walter Daniel, who wrote "Not omnipotent after all" on the margin of his Bible at Judges i, 19, which records that Jehovah "could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley because they had chariots of iron"; and the great-great-grandfather, John Moncure, rector of Overwharton, Virginia, in the middle of the

eighteenth century, concerning whom it is told how, when interrupted at his whist on a Saturday night by a deputation of farmers requesting that he would next day pray for rain, he at once replied: "Yes, I'll read the prayer, but it isn't going to rain till the moon changes." Decidedly a promising van-load! Even his orthodox father "scorned every superstition *not* found in the Bible," and thought that "Solomon's Song ought not to be in the Bible at all." Of his mother, too, he tells that in her youth, supervised by a Calvinist aunt, "she was kept in a sort of hot-house of Presbyterianism; and when her precocious soul revolted against the dogma of predestination, it was decided that she was ill and must be bled." But the father, noted for a time as a gay youth, soon after his early marriage became converted, with his wife, to Methodism, whereupon *his* heterodox father temporarily quarrelled with him, and three of the brothers and two of the sisters joined the convert. It was in this Methodist family—the

first in that region of good social position—that our Moncure Daniel Conway, who was to revert in his grandfather's direction, was born and brought up as good a young Methodist as any.

He had everything to make him so. His father was devoted to his Church, and the son tells how "In the Methodist 'love feasts,' where the 'experiences' were usually cant, my mother opened her heart with almost passionate fervour." Religion abounded on all hands: the abundant meteors of 1832 and the comet of 1843 set up panic terrors in those Protestant regions, and Methodism reaped a particularly large harvest from the comet. A local "witch" was persecuted till she drowned herself, in presence of a crowd who tacitly assented. But there was humour in the family, too, and Dr. Conway told me that it was his father who evoked the answer given in his story of the Methodist revival at White Oak. The revival had been worked from his father's place, Falmouth, and in due course it was

proposed to set up in White Oak a regular congregation, with seven deacons. At a meeting held at Falmouth for the purpose names were proposed, and when Peyton Conway had objected to a whole series, one being a drunkard, a second a rogue, a third a wife-beater, and so on, a perplexed member remarked that "if the Lord wants a church at White Oak he's got to take the materials to be found at White Oak." Young Moncure, however, was very serious, and not yet percipient of those aspects of religious life.

We see him from the first intensely affectionate and intensely sensitive, rather shy, averse to fighting, and not readily popular with other schoolboys, learning from Maria Edgeworth's tales "more about the value of kindness and generosity than I got from the Bible." His first great escapade, at the age of ten, was to jump out of a school window, seven or eight feet high, to get away to see Charles Dickens, "the greatest man in the world" for him then (and, indeed, always one

of his worshipped writers); and he bore his flogging with the fortitude of one who had had a great vision. At the age of sixteen, at Dickinson College, he went through the forms of getting "converted," hoping thus to gratify his parents; though, he tells us, he had at first "very little feeling or conviction of anything." His was not the nature to follow any course in a spirit of indifference; a wave of feeling followed, and on that supervened a fever, whereafter his religious life seems to have proceeded very much as before. Extracts from his juvenile journal before and after conversion show the same readiness to take a humorous view of questions of belief, the same complete freedom from religious malice. In that journal he had an entry à propos of an "infidel" among the students: the only comment is a satirical one on the tactic of making an unbeliever profess faith. In the "van-load," evidently, there were always representatives of the spirit of reason; for at sixteen, when some of those humorous comments had

been penned, Conway "had never seen an unorthodox book."

The effectual ploughing, so to speak, of his moral nature began with his early entrance into the then rapidly rising turmoil of the slavery contest. His father, like most well-to-do men in the South before the war, was a slave-owner, albeit a kindly one, and the boy was at first, of course, a confident champion of the institution. That was the stage at which Agassiz enraptured the slave-owners by propounding the theory that the races of mankind are not from a single pair, and professed men of science were found to support the theory. Thus, at the age of eighteen, the young Methodist was enabled to formulate in his debating society at Warrenton the theory that the negro, not being descended from Adam, was not a man within the meaning of the Declaration of Independence. If he had been, he would be entitled to liberty; as it was, "the Caucasian race, being the highest species, had the same right of dominion over

the lower species that he had over quadrupeds—the same right in kind, but not in degree.” Whereupon the orthodox *supporters* of slavery—there were no Abolitionists to reckon with in Virginia—pronounced him an infidel! They carefully ignored his argument that the negro, if descended from Adam, was entitled to liberty under the Constitution. What concerned them was the terrible dilemma that, if the negro were *not* descended from Adam, he had not inherited depravity by the Fall. What, then, would be the use of missions to the non-Caucasian races? It becomes easy to understand how, in a community thus rendered morally insane by creed, there could be found no way out of the slavery problem but civil war. Considering the matter retrospectively as at bottom an economic problem, one is disposed to ask whether nobody thought of settling it on economic lines, after the precedent in the British West Indies. Lincoln, in fact, favoured that plan, which was urged by both the Channings, supported by

Emerson, and for a time by Conway, while a student at Harvard. But in the light of the total discussion we can see that the South was nearer feudalism, if not fetishism, than social science. National iniquity seems to have this notable effect of perverting the whole faculty of political judgment, and where that has come about, sane solutions are excluded. The boy's first move towards sane politics was a plea, framed at the same time, for education in Virginia, where so many of the whites were degraded by the economic reaction of slavery ; but on that path also no progress was possible. Men's judgments were darkened.

One fact in Conway's family history illustrates the law. When the boy was boyishly co-operating with the pro-slavery propagandists, as early as 1849, his father, looking at the issue with a maturer mind, quietly warned him : " Don't be the fool of those people ! Slavery is a doomed institution ! " ¹

¹ *Autobiography*, i, 64.

The boy was simply mystified. Within a few years' time the son had become a convinced Abolitionist; while the father, gradually inflamed by the political strife, "abandoned his old moderation on the slavery question, and became a warm advocate of the system."¹ He believed, it appears, that none of his slaves desired freedom, and predicted at the outbreak of the war that the negroes in general would remain loyally at the side of their masters. Within a few days of that declaration, General McDowell unfurled the Union flag over Falmouth, and nearly every slave in the region, the elder Conway's included, came under it, seeking for freedom. All along, the mother had secretly hated slavery, as she had cause to do, though she resented her son's abolitionism. And all along those two Methodists, the father and mother, had acquiesced in the State law which forbade, under heavy penalties, the giving of any kind of direct educational instruction to

¹ *Testimonies Concerning Slavery*, 1864, p. 103.

negro children. Several ladies who did so in a very small way were sent to jail. So much could religion avail to remedy a vast evil, which corroded and demoralized the entire social and political life of the Republic. The fact that the slaves were free to be preached-to, and were preached-to freely, proves that religion was felt by the slave-owning class to be a useful means of reconciling them to their bondage.

It is not difficult to see how Conway was levered on his path by the pressures of elemental evil which thus early faced him. His nature was fundamentally and profoundly moral, sympathetic, justice-loving; and the problem of evil always haunted him. He craved to right wrongs, to expel sorrow from life; and it was in a kind of enthusiasm of humanity that he became a Methodist preacher at the age of nineteen. In the years following on his boyish conversion he had not moved much on the theological path; he had even studied law, and qualified himself

to be called to the bar. Then, to the surprise and pleasure of his parents, he suddenly declared for the Methodist ministry. Curiously enough, the determining impulse came from Emerson, of all men—Emerson, the Unitarian who had found Unitarianism too narrow, and had ceased attending any church. A first chance perusal of a passage in one of the *Essays*, read in the open on a day when the youth had gone out idly with his long-disused gun, stirred in him the recognition that his work in life lay in human relationships, needs, aspirations. The gun was laid aside forever, and the boy of eighteen turned towards Methodist preaching as the “instant way” to doing some humanist work.

I am not sure whether we should note this solely as proving that in Conway the logical or reasoning faculty was constitutionally less active than that of moral feeling. All judgment, of course, follows on lines of feeling: the difference is that the philosophical judgment ensues the feeling for truth, while the

moral judgment ensues sympathy, or the feeling for justice. In Conway the latter was the line of least resistance. About that very time his brilliant and admired cousin, John Daniel—who, without his knowledge, had endeavoured to establish a “liberal” or Universalist church at Richmond—warned him: “Whatever you do, don’t be a preacher. It is a wretched profession. Its dependence is on absurd dogmas. The Trinity is a theological invention, and hell-fire simply ridiculous.” But the boy “had not really entered on any theological inquiry,” and his cousin’s attack on dogmas, he tells us, made no serious impression on him. He came to those problems later, through his feelings: the mere intellectual untenableness of a position was never his first ground for rejecting it. To the end, I think, this remained characteristic of his mental processes. But we are to remember that he was a boy prematurely precipitated on such problems. He went to college at sixteen, years too soon, and became

a preacher (as he remarks) when he should have been going to college. Out of these committals he had to grow in his own way.

His youthful experience as a Methodist preacher was doubtless valuable to Conway as giving him that power of amiable feeling towards narrow people which formed an arc in the circle of his universalism. He saw them on their friendly, human side; and when the inevitable parting came, he was loth to leave them. It had been in some ways a pleasant life, with its riding through the woods from hamlet to hamlet. Yet he set out in a frame of dogmatic opinion quite methodistically orthodox. In the last of his set of *Farewell Discourses*, in 1884, he recalls that he had actually been found excessive in the stress of his orthodoxy; and that the children were rather afraid of him. "On one occasion," he tells us in the *Autobiography*, "hearing that some Methodist young ladies had danced at a ball, I preached so severely against such pleasures that the family resented

it, and joined another church." When I read that in the proofs of his autobiography, I asked him to describe to me the frame of mind in which he had delivered that sermon; but he replied that he could not. It had all passed away from him as completely as if it had been someone else's doing; he had only the record of the fact.

If those young ladies could have met their youthful censor a few years later, they would have received from him a very abject apology. No man ever more completely renounced the Puritanic principle. In late life he looked back, I think, with resentment on the whole ascetic side of his youthful religion, which he saw as a darkening and impoverishing of life, a shutting out of joy in the very act of promising happiness to the convert. I remember, at Rome, inviting him to admire the beautiful drapery-work on an old bust of a shrouded female head; but he refused to see any beauty in it. He impatiently dismissed it as a display of the ascetic instinct of concealment or

renunciation of beauty, and nothing would persuade him that the pagan sculptor had not been a forerunner of Christian pessimism in that direction.

The definite beginning of his movement to this humanist creed was his separation from Methodism, after less than two years of ministry. He moved quickly enough in all conscience; and the result was that every one of his stages meant getting into a position before he had thought all round it. But that is just what makes his pilgrimage so interesting, so intellectually adventurous. If he moved quickly, he did not move lightly. We can see him inevitably elbowed out of Methodism by its dogmatic exclusiveness, which came home to him newly with every day of his experience. Mixing with a kindly community of liberal Quakers, old and young, he found that they led happy and seemly lives without a creed of hell-fire and blood-redemption, though they *did* dress solely in greys; and when an old Quaker pointed out what

good agriculture they got by paying wages for all work, his pro-slavery ideals were upset. The continual reading of Emerson, eked out with Francis Newman, began to introduce a leaven of pantheism; and when, in a funeral sermon on a much-beloved negro woman, he intimated that death was not the result of sin, many of his hearers were painfully shocked. A friendly lady whispered to him one day after his sermon that he seemed to have been speaking to them from the moon. He had at first disturbed some by his rigid Scripturalism. Now he disturbed others by his aloofness from Scripture. Evidently his sphere lay elsewhere, and he slowly and sadly came out.

“A cruel side of the situation,” he writes, “was that my new steps had the appearance of being merely metaphysical. I was breaking my parents’ hearts—so it seemed—on abstract and abstruse issues, while I was really aiming at a new world. But this new world was of such a serious character—the

abolition of slavery, to begin with—that any intimation of it only made the doctrinal heresies more painful.” They were not exactly fundamental. He had not yet given up supernatural Christianity, being at the standpoint of orthodox Unitarianism; but when he announced his purpose to begin afresh as a student at the Harvard Divinity School, then predominantly Unitarian, his father solemnly told him he could not support him there. They had a neighbour in Fredericksburg, John Minor, who held entirely by the philosophy of Hobbes. “My father,” writes Conway, “thought John Minor as good a man as any in Virginia, though his ‘infidelity’ was well known. Why, then, his distress about my heresy? My father said it was due to his great affection for me, and I made that a count in my charge against dogmas. Why should a heavenly Father exact dogmas that cause discord between father and son on earth?” The argument is thoroughly characteristic: it was by such

pleas that Moncure Conway was always moved.

A year before, his elder brother had died, after finding that *he* could not be converted to the Methodism which Moncure was then still preaching, and after striving to think out for himself a religion without dogmas, good for all. Only later did the younger man come to know of it, when he himself was struggling hard in the same direction.

Of course, the father promptly repented of his pecuniary veto when someone reported to him that his son was starving himself at Harvard; but the hardship had gone no further than vegetarianism; and when the offer of paternal help came, the youth was already in his senior year, preaching nearly every Sunday, at the age of twenty-two, and earning fifteen or twenty dollars a week by it. Even at this period, living in admiring intercourse with Emerson and Thoreau—of whom the first frankly avowed that he “could not feel interested in Christianity,” and that he

valued even a Unitarian minister simply as "a conscientious man to sit on school committees, to help town meetings, to attend the sick and the dead"—the youth was heartily bent on being a preacher. It was such men as he, in fact, who best recruited the Unitarian pulpit. Emerson remarked to him that "the Unitarian churches were stated to be no longer producing ministers equal to their forerunners, but were more and more finding their best men in those coming from orthodox churches," who had "some enthusiasm for their new faith." And Conway, always enthusiastic in whatever he did, set out on his path afresh as minister of the Unitarian church at Washington in 1854, in his twenty-third year.

By this time the Slavery Question was more and more filling the foreground of national life; and his father, who once counselled him to moderation in pro-slavery opinions, actually wrote him to express satisfaction that he had not found it convenient to come home on a day proposed, because his anti-slavery views

would have endangered the family. "These opinions," wrote the good gentleman, "give me more uneasiness now than your horrible views on religion, bad as these are." And he went on : " Having exhausted all our rational effort, we hand you over to the mercy of God through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ..... If you make shipwreck in this life and the next, you must not only wade through the precious blood of Christ and do despite to the spirit of His Grace, but your father's prayers, so long as life lasts, will be thrown in the way also." Soon afterwards a kindly uncle expressed to him the fear that Unitarianism tended to cultivate the head more than the heart ; and the young Unitarian does not seem to have inquired whether Methodism had been a success in the hearts of Virginian slave-owners. Certainly their heads were not their strong point. Conway had, in fact, only recently made his first open anti-slavery pronouncement in his pulpit at Washington. A little later, though he was kindly received

at home when he did go there, he was compelled by the pro-slavery neighbours, chiefly the younger men, to go away at once, in order to save his family from molestation.

In Washington he soon put himself in a new jeopardy by impugning a municipal ordinance for a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, by way of averting the divine wrath as exhibited in a bad epidemic of yellow fever in a part of Virginia. It was at the same period that Palmerston in England refused the request of the Edinburgh Presbytery to appoint a day of fasting on account of the cholera, and suggested the whitewashing of the closes instead. As always, Conway saw the human and moral side of the matter. Asked about the same time to preach "a sermon on God—simply God," he found a good deal more difficulty in stating his conclusions, and preached a series of discourses of which he says in the *Autobiography*: "On reading it now I recall once more Renan's reflection on

the many headaches suffered by young men in exchanging one error for another."

The course of events rapidly forced upon him a problem of the kind that stirred him most deeply. The Slavery Question went from bad to worse, and he felt bound to face in his pulpit the political issues involved. Hating war even more than he now hated slavery, he proposed the ostensibly natural moral solution of separation of the North from the South: a political mistake then made by many abolitionists, and one which involved him in more than one embarrassment. To us to-day it seems perfectly obvious, in view of the previous course of the dispute, that a mere severance of the union by consent would only have postponed war, inasmuch as the Slave Power was bound to fight a neighbour which received its fugitive slaves and did not return them. Yet when William Henry Channing, then holding a pulpit in England, wrote to Conway to that effect, the latter saw nothing in the argument. "I do not

remember," he writes, "to have taken any note of it at all"; and of Channing's statesmanlike plan, derived from his uncle, for emancipation by purchase, which had been favoured by Emerson as it was later by Lincoln, he had, he says, no hope; "having discovered, while at Cambridge, that it was too late." Statesmanship, evidently, was not in the air.

The immediate trouble for Conway, however, was not objection to his policy of dissolving the Union: it was the simple fact that he had resolutely denounced the principle of slavery. His congregation had backed him in rejecting the day of fasting for the pestilence: they were not ready to follow him in opposing slavery, though nearly half of them agreed with him. Always high-minded and unselfish, he at once resolved not to split the congregation, and suggested a compromise in the shape of an invitation to Channing to succeed him, which, oddly enough, they accepted. Presumably they did not know

that Channing's policy was the resolute maintenance of the Union with an equally resolute elimination of slavery, albeit by economic methods; though they must have known that Channing's famous uncle had lost his pulpit in Boston by his anti-slavery sermons, and had first proposed emancipation by purchase.

However that might be, Conway had to go; and at the age of twenty-four he set out on another stage in his life's pilgrimage, becoming minister of the First Congregational Church in Cincinnati towards the end of 1856. Always he had thus to part with people to whom he had been warmly attached. At Washington only a few of the men in his church, and none of the women, had been really angry with him; and he had formed many warm friendships. His anti-slavery sermons had not been numerous: he had preferred "bringing critical studies to bear on half-mythical figures in the New Testament—Jesus, Nathaniel, Judas, Mary Magdalene

—and evoking from them purely human characters.” We, who have known the charm and the stimulus of his discourses from this platform during so many years, can realize with what a pang those early hearers, Methodists and Unitarians, successively parted from him. At Cincinnati, where he had his congregation with him on slavery, he was destined to take further theological steps. After a year he found he had “replaced the Unitarian Christ of Cambridge professors by a living human Jesus, learned at the feet of poor blacks,” thus, as always, following the law and the lead of his moral affections. But we are to remember that this movement of his mind was reinforced by the whole course of the various culture which he was constantly acquiring. By this time he had put the old Methodist asceticism far behind him. Intensely social in his real nature, he “was adopted in the clubs, and wrote criticisms (anonymous) of the classical concerts, the picture exhibitions, the operas and plays.”

He found himself accepted as an original interpreter of Beethoven's symphonies ; and he braved the risk of a new odium by "comparing the clerical enemies of the theatre to Jonah demanding the destruction of Nineveh."

Here it was that he married (1858) the beautiful and lovable woman who, by all of us who knew them, will be remembered equally with him as long as memory lasts. A member of his congregation, she faithfully and cordially accompanied him through the rest of his long pilgrimage, till the dark Christmas Day on which he lost her, after forty years of married life. It was in that period of new and vivid happiness, with the dark cloud of civil war steadily gathering overhead, that he took his next theological step. Open to friendly communion on every side, he delivered an address in a Roman Catholic church, the result of a meeting with the local bishop at a poor woman's deathbed ; and he was equally friendly with the Jews. From the first he had set himself, as a minister, to grapple with

social evils ; and hospitals for foundlings and for unfortunate women were among the results of his influence. Thus, active on all sides, he inevitably met with the Freethinkers, to whom he would be none the less friendly because it was they who, in Boston, first provided a hall in which Wendell Philipps could speak against slavery, when every other hall and every church was closed to him. From them he first heard something of the truth about Thomas Paine, and it was on Paine's birthday, January, 1860, that Conway delivered a sermon which bore the title : " Thomas Paine : a Celebration," the forecast of the fine monument to that hero's memory which he was later to raise in his admirable biography, and his complete edition of Paine's works.

In private debate with some of the Cincinnati Freethinkers, who had passed beyond Paine's deism, he found himself driven to reconsider his own theism. Already he had delivered a series of discourses against supernaturalism, to the distress of one-third of his

congregation, this being, he tells us, "the first time that simple theism had invaded any Western pulpit." Now he delivered a sermon on "God," in which he demonstrated that the notion of "will" on the part of God was a fallacy, since for him there never could be a question of choice. Here we are very near an impersonal theism that verges on pantheism, though ten years later we find Conway, in his book, *The Earthward Pilgrimage*, still holding by some formula of a benevolent deity.

Naturally all this made trouble in a Cincinnati congregation of 1860. A section of his hearers seceded to form a "Church of the Redeemer," which lasted till 1875, when, on a return from England for a few months, he was welcomed by both sections alike, and had the happiness of delivering the opening address at their reunion in one society.

Meanwhile the great insoluble political issue had fatally drifted on to civil war, and it was at some time near the outbreak of that

that Conway made his public and concrete repudiation of the God idea of his orthodox contemporaries. He has cheerfully preserved for us an extract from a letter to the Cincinnati *Enquirer*, in which an anonymous "Soldier of the Constitution" declared that

any man professing to be a Christian minister, who classes Jehovah, the Christian's God, in the same category with Mars and Jupiter and Odin, the barbarous and licentious creations of a heathen imagination, and says, as did Mr. Conway, that our God of Battles is no better than these pagan deities, should be indicted under the statute against blasphemy, if there be one in your State laws.

In all this stress of debate and propaganda he found time for other forms of intellectual life; and in January, 1860, he started a monthly magazine under an already famous title, *The Dial*. It lasted for one year, being "slain by the Union war several months in advance of its outbreak." Out of 200 articles Conway had contributed thirty.

It is obviously impossible in this lecture to trace in any detail the inception and course of

the Civil War; the vehement conflicts of opinion in the North on the question how slavery was to be got rid of; the alternate censure and support given by Conway to Lincoln; the connections between English and American opinion during the course of the struggle. I can but say that Conway's account will be found one of the most illuminating of all those penned. He knew the whole thing from within as few men did, being behind the scenes on both sides; and he paid the price of his convictions by leading his father's slaves into safety in the North, when the war freed them, at no small risk to himself. He could have sold them in Baltimore for 50,000 dollars. His Autobiography, written with his unique gift for kindling personal interest in all subjects, calls up for us the actual play of hope and fear, malice and sympathy, both in the States and in England, during those dark years. I do not scruple to say, indeed, that his is the most variously fascinating autobiography I know. To write

an interesting account of your own life you have to be sincerely interested in other people, and few men can have had a wider range of human sympathies than Conway's. A generation or two hence the book will probably rank as one of the richest records of an age unprecedentedly fertile alike in biography and in autobiography.

With nearly all the American life of the middle of last century he was in touch, and in his pages we come in living contact with Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman—of whom Conway was one of the first admirers—Longfellow, Lowell, Holmes, Agassiz, Parker. The accounts of Lincoln, too, of whom Conway was often critical, are most valuable, and, perhaps, less damaging than he realized. As soon as he comes to England, in 1863, the light begins to fall still more brightly on the English figures of the time. At once we are introduced to the Carlyles. When writing his *Autobiography* Conway found the old notebook which he could not discover when he

was writing his book on Carlyle ; and though his presentment of the sage is somewhat "systematically benevolent," as Arnold would say, those authentic conversations, in which Mrs. Carlyle plays her part, are among our most important memorials of the pair. Conway emphatically repels Froude's presentment of Carlyle's domestic life, showing concretely wherein it is false ; and, though this does not affect the criticism of Carlyle the writer, it does decisively control our notion of the man. The plain truth is that Froude was as prone to error in biography as in history, and Conway's correction is all the more weighty inasmuch as his personal feeling for Froude was to the end one of affection. He always retained his American citizenship, never becoming naturalized here ; but in all that was best and most enlightened in English life for a whole generation he shared as few aliens ever did. The Autobiography is a continuous flow of vivid reminiscence. Rapidly we come in contact with a crowd of the other

memorable personalities of the time—Francis Newman, his brother the Cardinal (sketched at his devotions with singular vividness), Martineau, Maurice, Froude, Rossetti, Spencer, Browning, Tennyson, Clifford, Huxley, Lewes and George Eliot, Dickens, Thackeray, Mill, Morris, and a host of less famous but memorable people.

It was upon this manifold culture, literary, artistic, philosophical, scientific, that Conway strengthened himself for the ministry which, during twenty-one years, he continuously carried on in this place, and it was in terms of that culture that he made the remainder of his intellectual journey. When he came to England he had already outgrown orthodox Unitarianism, and stood, I suppose, very much where W. J. Fox had done when he gave up his South Place ministry. In that connection Conway has recorded his conviction that it was the young Robert Browning who, about 1828, had by his arguments shaken the faith of Sarah Flower Adams in

revelation, with the result that she in turn influenced Fox, who, about 1830, began to propound a rationalistic theism. Always politically liberal, he became more and more so in creed, and it was the lack of sympathetic successors that brought about the decline in membership and influence from which the committee, in 1863, besought Conway to save them by taking the then vacant post. No other man could have filled it as he could and did. Coming to England on his political mission to secure moral support for the abolition of slavery, he found opened for him another career, for which he was uniquely fitted.

Most of the eminent men with whom he had intercourse in England, it will be noted, were unbelievers in orthodox Christianity ; even Tennyson being heterodox on future punishment. But it was the age of respectable reticence. Arnold pontifically censured Colenso for not writing in Latin, and Carlyle told Conway how, when Strauss published his first

Life of Jesus, a number of men who, like himself, held similar views, thought Strauss did very ill to publish his ; and, when his actress wife separated from him, spoke of it as a judgment on him for his recklessness. Darwin was still much vituperated, by Carlyle among others. Mill, standing up for the tribe of unbelievers in his *Liberty* (1859), had not avowed that he himself was one. It was in the earlier 'seventies that the angels began to pluck up courage, and to adventure where the fighting Freethinkers had so long been doing obscure battle. Conway was one of the very first of the literary class to come forth with a clear pronouncement against the whole historic Christian creed and ecclesiastical system, setting forth the lesson of his own exodus in the book which he so significantly called *The Earthward Pilgrimage* (1870). The title summed up his intellectual history. Beginning in the old religion of another world beyond this, he had, step by step, detached himself from supernaturalism, making

his theology quadrate more and more faithfully with his real interests in life. All that now remained to him was an attenuated theism, which, looking backward later, he likened to Arnold's faith in a "stream of tendency, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness." It was rather more than that, for in 1870 he seems to have still associated personality with his Theos; but from that position, too, he moved onwards, as others moved with him. Perhaps the impact of the personality of Clifford was one of the principal factors in stirring up the new *Aufklärung*; but Conway's book antedates Clifford, whom he did not meet till the vogue of the book brought him an invitation from Sidgwick and other eminent Fellows to visit Cambridge University. It was not till 1873 that Spencer, in his *Study of Sociology*, added positive censure of the Christian position to his scientific undermining of supernaturalism. Mill's *Autobiography* came out in the same year, and his *Three Essays* on religion in 1874. A year or

two later Arnold, who had so boggled at Colenso on the Pentateuch, produced his blasphemous account of the Christian Trinity as a fairy tale of three Lord Shaftesburys; and that which had been termed aggressive free-thinking a few years before could claim to be the expression of the attitude and the convictions of the leading English minds of the time.

Those of us who were then in adolescence can clearly recall the stir and stimulus of it all—the rapid recognition by the open minds that the established religion was being discredited no less by science and rational ethics than by the criticism which was disintegrating anew the sacred books. I sometimes wonder whether the present generation can realize the nature of the ferment that went on from forty to thirty years ago, when a kind of tidal wave seemed to be flowing through the intellectual world. South Place, under Conway, then constituted for the middle and upper class in London what the Hall of Science was for a

more miscellaneous audience, a centre of living criticism which shaped minds and lives on all sides. These are influences which, as Bain said of that of John Stuart Mill, no calculus can integrate. I suppose Conway never had the range of influence that he might have had if his weekly discourses had been effectually published. They are among the most readable things produced in their age, marked at once by admirable literary gift, a wide and various knowledge, and a play of feeling and sympathy which would have fascinated thousands, could they have been duly circulated. No one else, I think, has combined such matter with such charm, such felicity of phrase, such play of humour, and such forthright force of earnest utterance upon living themes. To this day you could not find better literature for a receptive soul that has begun to think independently upon the ultimate problems of life than his published *Lessons for the Day* and his volume entitled *Idols and Ideals*, with

its appended *Essay on Christianity*, which is in some respects as stringent and powerful a criticism of current religion as ever was penned. But these discourses and essays do not seem to have in any great degree reached the wider reading public either here or in America; and the main influence of Conway, I suppose, operated through this place. That, indeed, was influence enough for even a more ambitious man. No preacher of that day in London ever had a more enlightened audience than that which Conway built up and held for one and twenty years.

Only a mind which was always "opening new windows" for itself could have so succeeded; and Conway's life was at all times many-sided, energetic, truly scholarly, while cordially human. Perhaps not all even among his congregation realized his versatility. The *Sacred Anthology* (1874), the *Demonology and Devil-Lore* (two vols., 1878), and the monograph on *The Wandering Jew* (1881) attest his originality and industry in

humanist research ; and we know that it was the *Anthology* which aroused the interest that encouraged and enabled Max Müller to undertake the great series of "Sacred Books of the East." Conway's books on Carlyle, Emerson, and Hawthorne, again, reveal the warmth of his hero-worship, and reveal, too, new aspects of the men portrayed ; his *Life and Papers of Edmund Randolph* (1888), his two volumes on Washington, and his great *Life of Thomas Paine* (two vols., 1892), with the re-cast French edition, are permanently important contributions to history as well as to biography ; his *Solomon and Solomonite Literature* is a curious piece of out-of-the-way scholarship and speculation ; and I take leave to recommend the little known *Travels in South Kensington* (1882) as a delightful volume which will repay reading by anybody, and will always possess a special fragrance for those who knew the man who here reveals one of his many mental sides. As he told me, he put as much study and work into that as into almost anything he

wrote ; but, indeed, he always put his whole heart into whatever he did. I have read, I believe, all of his books published in England except the novel *Palm and Pine* (1887) and the *Necklace of Stories* (1879) ; and I do not think I ever found in them a dull sentence.

To that full literary life he added no small output in the way of journalism, which he carried on by way of regular contributions to American papers and magazines ; and the further memorable experience of a month's service as a war correspondent in 1870. He had planned to go to see the Passion Play at Ober-Ammergau when he was appealed to by the *New York World* to become its correspondent on the French side in the vast tragedy that was beginning between France and Germany. Reaching Metz and finding himself unable to be of much use, he decided to go over to the Germans ; and there he, who had made the acquaintance of Strauss in time of peace, made that of Bismarck in war. In the month of service which was all he would

undertake to give, he saw, as far as one man might, the fight and slaughter of Gravelotte. It was his report, communicated on his return to the *Daily News*, that was circulated throughout Europe in all languages. In his *Autobiography* he has told how he stood part of the time beside the central staff, and noted Von Moltke, "who looks like a fleshless death's-head beside the florid king." Thus once more had he seen the sun turned to blood by the still invincible madness of men.

When, in 1884, Conway gave the addresses which he published as his *Farewell Discourses*, before returning, as he thought for good, to the United States, to devote himself to literary work, he had, as he tells us, delivered his ethical and religious convictions with a certain completeness. He had reached an entirely rationalistic standpoint. In 1878 he and others had convened the Congress of Liberal Thinkers which met in this chapel; and in 1883-4 he had made his "Pilgrimage to the

Wise Men of the East," wherein he studied with his keenly observant human interest all manner of faiths, ancient and modern, from Brahmanism and Buddhism to Theosophy and Mormonism. In the light of such an experience he no longer held by any form of theism: the one properly religious element which he retained was an admiration for the personality which he believed himself able to detach from the Gospels, and which he bracketed with the personality of Buddha. For him religion had become a question, first and last, of right life and human betterment, peace on earth and goodwill among nations, races, sects, parties.

"My rejection of Christianity," he declared, in the last discourse of all, "is not the result of criticism, but because I know that, as it has steeped the earth in blood, so this day it can make loving hearts turn to stone against those to whom they owe love, if they do not share their dogma. The soul of theology is hatred, and there is no demon which can produce so much anguish as hatred. This is my experience. I have lost many sweet intimacies, have suffered years of solitude, all because I could not agree with the

metaphysics of preachers who happened to have in their keeping the consciences of my early companions.”

In recent years he had seen Mrs. Besant deprived of the custody of her children because of her freethinking ; and he had seen four years of the iniquitous exclusion of Charles Bradlaugh from Parliament, with all the manifestations of pious hatred thereto appertaining. It had all led him more and more to the attitude of the untrammelled Free-thinker—the free lance. “The Unitarians of London,” he testified, “never liked us”; some provincial societies had been friendly ; but the Unitarian Association had always given the cold shoulder. “If the Christian name be the only shred of a creed left,” he declared, “then men will say all manner of things against you for Christ’s sake if you do not agree to that shred.” Theism he had equally seen to fail in the work of harmonization,

because it could not take by the hand with cordiality anyone who had doubts concerning divine personality, however religious those doubts, however earnest his

spirit.....A Theist who dislikes an Atheist because he is an Atheist shows that his Theism doesn't bear as fine fruit as Atheism—that is, if the Atheism be humane and magnanimous.

And again :—

The name of God has been of late so degraded, it has been so adduced to label public meanness and wrong, that it can never be utilized for any organization that shall represent the supreme ideal and aim of a free and civilized people.

What he was most clear about, after the affirmation of the ideals of human brotherhood and betterment, was just the value of such an entirely free discussion of all religious problems, in themselves and in their human bearings, as the existence of the South Place Society had made possible.

On the whole, his tone about life was still optimistic, though he had all along been averse to all rhetoric, American or English, which glorified man in the mass as pietists had glorified God. “Not the mass of humanity,” he protested, “but the excellence of humanity; not the vast predatory multitude, but the best that is in each, the supreme virtue, and wisdom,

and beauty potential in all, flowering in the Sages and Saviours of the race," give mankind its right direction. Here already we find him striking a note that in his later years was common with him—the protest against a belief in Progress as something inevitable: a belief which, as he justly argued, was philosophically on all fours with belief in a beneficent Providence.

It was only during his second tenure of his old post at South Place in 1892–97 that I first had the privilege of personally knowing Conway: he had left it, in 1884, just before I came to London. Mrs. Conway was still by his side; and the course of things had not impaired his cordial enjoyment of life. But he was not to have his helpmeet to the journey's end.

In 1897 Mrs. Conway was taken back to her native land to die, after long and weary suffering; and thenceforth there was in his talk a recurrent undertone of sadness that was only too intelligible after the

shock of loss, and anguish of farewells
At that eternal parting of the ways.

History, in both of his fatherlands, turned into evil paths. After his wife's death, he writes,

Broken by personal bereavement, filled with horror by the reign of terror suffered by negroes in the South, alienated from my countrymen by what seemed to me a mere lynching of Spain—my youthful visions turned to illusions—I left for Europe. In June, 1898, I gave several discourses to my old congregation in London; but there, too, the sky was overcast. England, too, was preparing to enter on a murderous career of aggression. Some of the most distinguished liberal thinkers were following in that direction. Chamberlain, who had given to Birmingham the reputation of being the ideal Unitarian city, was proving that the orthodox Nonconformists were more humane than the Unitarians.

I think the last sentence is less than just to the Unitarians in general; but I will not answer for Birmingham on that score.

The last page of the *Autobiography*, penned in 1904, ends on a similarly sombre note:—

It appears but too probable that my old eyes must close upon a world given over to the murderous exploitation of the weak nations by the strong—even

the new peace treaties between the latter being apparently alliances for mutual support in devouring helpless tribes and their lands.

But, he adds, "there are a few hopeful signs—the grand victory of the unofficial pen over the sword in the Dreyfus struggle in France," and the revival of Spain, freed from her ulcers; and he proceeds to make a last appeal to every reader to do *his* utmost to preserve Peace. Then comes the conclusion:—

So far as my personal life is concerned, I have gathered mostly the flowers that have bloomed along my path, and said little of the thorns; but, despite the sharpest of these, I would gladly go over my pilgrimage again. Yes—yes! Were it only for the forty years of happy wedlock.

And thus he bore himself to the end. In 1906 appeared his *Pilgrimage to the Wise Men of the East*, the record of his world journey of 1883–1884, written in the evening shadows that were now beginning to fall. The shadows in the pictures are naturally deepened, the note of sadness more frequent; but still there is the old yearning for the

spread of human sunshine. He had seen so much of moral suffering, and had latterly endured so much, that perhaps he lost sight of the fact that happiness can be selfish.

Unhappiness [he writes at the close of his *Prolegomena*] is the root of all evil. From it spring meanness, vice, crime, bitterness, injustice. Happiness is the sacred spirit, the mother of virtues. What imaginable function has religion except to promote human happiness?

Here speaks the old loving heart, responsive ever to the human appeal, and always reluctant, therefore, to round the human problem in a philosophy—or, at least, in a scientific one. In 1894 Conway sent me for the *Free Review* a curious paper entitled "The Living and the Not-Living," in which he argued that that formula, and not a doctrine of two personal Powers, represented the fundamental doctrine of Zoroaster; and that in the conception of the universe as composed of two contrary elements—one organic, living, light-giving, joy-making, upbuilding; the other inorganic, lightless, joyless, destructive—lies

the true solution of the problem of evil. He asked my opinion on the essay; and I told him I could not see how he drew a line between the *destructive-organic*, the living microbe, fostered by the sun's heat, scattering pestilence and death, and the *constructive-organic*, which he identified with the good side of things. I understood him to admit that the antithesis broke down. But in the *Autobiography* he partly returned to it, telling (ii, 265) how it was à propos of an old debate between Mrs. Besant and a clergyman that he reached "the conviction that Organic and Inorganic are essentially separate and co-eternal." This is, of course, incompatible with scientific monism; and that identification of happiness with goodness is equally incompatible with philosophical monism.

The truth surely is that in man the Microcosm, as in the Macrocosm, good and evil, happiness and unhappiness, are correlative and reciprocally reactive; that the poten-

tialities of good and evil are the reciprocal conditions of each ; and that sheer unchequered happiness is unthinkable. Further, is not happiness actually *found* by half the animal world in the effecting of the opposite for others ; and are not the merely happy, in the terms of the case, unsympathetic ? Rational happiness, when all is said, lies in partaking sufficiently of joy to sustain us in striving to lessen misery : the cry for the elimination of woe is but the demand for another world. And still the paradox holds that the yearning to eliminate woe is the mainspring of all betterment ; for none can pretend to mete out the right quantity of unhappiness. Yes ; but the paradox does not bear the conclusion that unhappiness is the root of all evil. The root of all evil lies, like other roots, in the constitution of the universe ; unhappiness is one of the forms of evil which all seek to evade, but cannot wholly escape ; and it is at least as much a consoling as a chastening reflec-

tion—I should say it is both—that unhappiness may educate us towards seeking the happiness of others.

It is one of the titles of Moncure Conway to our loving remembrance that he, who little needed such education, was thus influenced by the unhappiness which fell to his share. Half his warfare against false creeds was inspired by the hope to save others from the pangs which such creeds had brought upon him and, to his knowledge, upon others. Bereaved himself, he was the more profoundly concerned that the world should enjoy all its possibilities; and in those last nine years of his life he was no less sociable, even as he was no less diligent, than in the past. In the charming preface which he wrote in the last year of all for the reprint of a selection of his *Lessons for the Day*, he employs his rare gift of apologue to set forth his vision of the space he had travelled in the last of the three quarters of a century through which he had passed. In a mystical picture

of Rossetti's, entitled "How They Met Themselves," two lovers in a lonely wood come face to face with their own wraiths, and the hand of the knight leaps to his sword-hilt. So the old teacher of Seventy-five, meeting the younger self of Fifty, puts his hand instinctively to his weapon—his pen. But after all he found little to change. The discourse entitled "The First Person" ends in the reprint as in the original: "O my friends, Love is the only God that endureth for ever, and Work the only worship that does not sink to a ceremony." The indictment of the moral failure of Christianity in the discourse on "The Arimathean's Tomb" stands as it had been written in the old days:—

Its interest centres entirely on all that part of Christ's life with which he had nothing to do: his birth, his death, his burial.....are cornerstones of the faith called after him; they alone are memorialized in holy days. Christianity has lasted all these centuries without anyone proposing a festival of the Sea of Galilee, or a holiday of the Olive Mount. We have not a Golden-Rule Wednesday, or a Love-your-Enemies Friday.

There was nothing to alter in the moral law laid down in the discourse on *The Freethinker's Vision beyond Death* :—

I believe the strongest moral force upon a human being would be to convince him of that principle of Marcus Aurelius—that in a scene of chaos he could be the force of order.....Having explored the past upon which he stands, the thinker has found moral government in nature practically limited to man's government ; and this means that each individual can be a force of order and beauty amid the wildness of nature.

Nor was there anything to alter in the warning to Freethinkers to beware of developing the temper of persecution :—

It is to be hoped that orthodoxy will never be fought with orthodoxy. For orthodoxy is not a particular set of views, but a temper.....

What is most needed is that intellectual liberty shall not employ the like weapons, and that it shall not seek mere retaliation, nor merely to sound a pæan of victory. That is the orthodox way.....

The great cause is not a Freethinker's cause, but an English cause, a human cause, and its victory will be as much that of the orthodox as of the unorthodox..... The great victories of truth and freedom in the world are victories for all.

On Pessimism he had written : " No man ever complained of the total worthlessness of life who ever saved another from death, anguish, or despair." From that saying he could never have drawn back. The last sentence of the Preface, written so near the end, runs :—

I have hardly the right, even had I the inclination, to obtrude on those utterances any of the disillusionments that usually beset old men whose past world has turned into a beautiful Utopia.

It was the note of ebbing life : the quiet recognition that the old man's outlook cannot be that of youth, whatever be the creed. And the life *had* been lived in the light of the ideal, zealously, cordially, cheerfully. To the last I never found him despairing, never even apathetic ; but ever alertly interested in people, ideas, and problems, delighted to hear of any good deed, as he had been thrilled in dark days to witness the triumphant revolt of the best brains in France against the serried forces of wrong in the case of Dreyfus. And

when the end came it was even such as he might have wished, the book falling from his hand as he passed away, reading in his chair.

If we need any antidote to sadness over the retrospect, is it not given in the life itself? This standard-bearer of truth and justice, who never struck a savage blow, had come out of slave-holding Virginia. Out of the darkness had come so much of light. This apostle of free culture, servant through fifty assiduous years of the spirit of reason, had been bred in a narrow sectarianism, from which he had steadily climbed to the clear heights of a scientific faith, purged of all intolerance. What had been possible for him is conceivably possible for the race. And no faith has ever offered men a fairer hope than that for the life which, as they are increasingly content to confess, is the only one about which they need concern themselves.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES CONCERNING MONCURE DANIEL CONWAY

1832. Born in Virginia.
1850. *Free Schools in Virginia.*
1851. Enters Methodist Ministry.
1854. Enters Unitarian Ministry.
1858. Marries.
1863. Comes to England.
1864. Preaches at South Place Chapel.
1865. Appointed permanent Minister.
1869. Abandonment of prayer, followed by gradual abandonment of Theism.
1870. *The Earthward Pilgrimage.*
1874. *The Sacred Anthology.*
1877. *Idols and Ideals.*
1883. *Lessons for the Day* (2 vols.). (Revised edition, 1907.)
1884. Temporarily retires from South Place.

1892. Returns to South Place.
Life of Thomas Paine.
1897. Death of Mrs. Conway.
Final retirement from South Place.
1904. *Autobiography* (2 vols.).
1906. *My Pilgrimage to the Wise Men of the East.*
1907. Dies in Paris.
1909. *Moncure D. Conway: Addresses and Reprints.* (A Memorial volume containing a complete Bibliography.)
1910. First Memorial Lecture.
1911. Second Memorial Lecture.
1912. Third Memorial Lecture.
1913. Fourth Memorial Lecture.
1914. Fifth Memorial Lecture.
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APPENDIX B

THE CONWAY MEMORIAL LECTURESHIP

At a general meeting of the South Place Ethical Society, held on October 22, 1908, it was resolved, after full discussion, that an effort should be made to establish a series of lectures, to be printed and

widely circulated, as a permanent Memorial to Dr. Conway.

Moncure Conway's untiring zeal for the emancipation of the human mind from the thralldom of obsolete or waning beliefs, his pleadings for sympathy with the oppressed and for a wider and profounder conception of human fraternity than the world has yet reached, claim, it is urged, an offering of gratitude more permanent than the eloquent obituary or reverential service of mourning.

The range of the lectures (of which the fifth is published herewith) must be regulated by the financial support accorded to the scheme ; but it is hoped that sufficient funds will be forthcoming for the endowment of periodical lectures by distinguished public men, to further the cause of social, political, and religious freedom, with which Dr. Conway's name must ever be associated.

The Committee, although not yet in possession of the necessary capital for the permanent endowment of the Lectureship, thought it better to inaugurate the work rather than to wait for further contributions. The funds in hand, together with those which may reasonably be expected in the immediate future, will ensure the

delivery of an annual lecture for some years at least.

The Committee earnestly appeal either for donations or subscriptions from year to year until the Memorial is permanently established. Contributions may be forwarded to the Hon. Treasurer.

On behalf of the Executive Committee :—

W. C. COUPLAND, M.A., *Chairman*.

(Mrs.) C. FLETCHER SMITH and E. J. FAIRHALL,
Hon. Secretaries.

(Mrs.) F. M. COCKBURN, *Hon. Treasurer*, "Pera-
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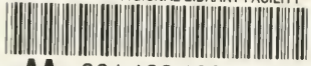
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